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Letter dated 9 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a statement issued on 28 February 2000 by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the sentencing by the Riga district court of Mr. V. M. Kononov as a former commander of a partisan detachment that fought against fascism during the Second World War (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 116.

(*Signed*) S. **Lavrov**

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Annex

Statement issued on 28 January 2000 by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the sentencing by the Riga district court of Mr. V. M. Kononov as a former commander of a partisan detachment that fought against fascism during the Second World War

By a verdict handed down by the Riga district court on 21 January 2000, retired Colonel V. M. Kononov, a 77-year-old veteran of the Second World War and a hero of the anti-Nazi partisan war in Latvia, was found guilty of committing an offence under article 68, paragraph 3, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Latvia and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The court found Mr. Kononov guilty of being the leader of a group of partisans which, in carrying out a military operation in the village of Malye Baty in Ludza district of Latvia in May 1944, killed nine alleged civilians who were, however, armed and were cooperating with the Nazis. Mr. Kononov has not admitted his guilt since, as a partisan, he fought against the enemy according to the laws of war.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has serious doubts as to the validity of the decision taken by the Riga district court, which has sentenced Mr. Kononov to a long prison term, essentially for his opposition to fascism. The Latvian authorities have set a monstrous precedent, which can lead in that country to a series of trials of Second World War veterans who fought on the side of the States of the anti-Nazi coalition and defended the world against fascism.

Although the Latvian authorities have tried and sentenced Mr. Kononov, a veteran of the Great Patriotic War, they are at the same time in no hurry to begin proceedings against the Nazi collaborator Konrads Kalejs who during the war was a member of the commando of executioners led by the Latvian Fascist Viktors Arajs, who was active in the Latvian Auxiliary Security Police of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (security service) and who murdered 30,000 civilians.

The State Duma has repeatedly received statements and appeals indicating the Latvian authorities' criminal attempt to revise the principles of the Nuremberg tribunal, which are respected by the international community. This is, in essence, tantamount to revising the outcome of the Second World War and vindicating fascism.

The State Duma has more than once drawn the international community's attention to the increasing activities of far-right pro-Fascist forces in Latvia and to the elevation of the ideas of militant nationalism and chauvinism to a State ideology. The fact that a political regime based on extreme nationalism and chauvinism is being formed in Latvia is also demonstrated by the Latvian authorities' reaction to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in connection with the trial of the veteran and anti-Fascist V. M. Kononov.

The State Duma demands that the Latvian authorities renounce all attempts to rehabilitate fascism and militant nationalism and insists on a speedy review of Mr. Kononov's case.